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RATHER: These reports of a possibly worsening Chernenko illness, some in what apparently has been a hectic week at the Kremlin. White House correspondent Lesley Stahl reports that the decision to boycott the Summer Olympics was not unanimous, that it was made in the face of bitter objections from inside the Moscow leadership.

STAHL: CBS News has learned that the Soviet decision to boycott the Olympics was made by the ruling Communist Party Politburo late last week. It was a sudden, last-minute decision made after a vigorous and divisive debate within the Kremlin, that according to U.S. intelligence sources. Administration officials say the debate involved on one side, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, described as the major hardliner who wants to hinder Ronald Reagan's re-election chances. With him, the so-called security people, worried about defections. On the other side, the moderates, who see sports as a major tool of Soviet propaganda and foreign policy. Siding with the moderates, several Eastern European nations, specifically Hungary, whose foreign minister is said to have argued angrily with Gromyko late last month against the suggestion of a boycott, and East Germany, whose defense minister protested the Soviet action earlier this week. 'There's a lot we don't know,' said an administration official; 'we don't have microphones in Politburo meetings, but we do know that this is not a popular decision within the Kremlin or the Warsaw bloc and that the internal arguing was so intense, that the decision was finally made at the highest levels.' U.S. officials are pointing to the evidence of a sudden decision in an attempt to justify the Reagan administration's surprise over the announcement. 'The fact that the Soviets went ahead with the boycott in the face of such internal opposition shows,' says one U.S. official, 'that they're obviously willing to let U.S.-Soviet relations sink into a cold, cold night.' We're beginning to think it could be a long, cold night that extends well beyond the election. Lesley Stahl, CBS News, the White House.

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